Control Committees in Union Territories have been designated as the prescribed authority to implement the Batteries (Management & Handling) Rules, 2001. These rules have been widely circulated and the implementing agencies have been asked to strictly enforce various provisions of the rules.

Satkosia Forests as Tiger Reserve

2790. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for which there has been delay in declaring the Satkosia forests in Orissa as a Project Tiger Reserve; and

(b) what are the lacunae in Satkosia for which such a delay is occurring in view of the recent such declarations in other States?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Satkosia is not one of the areas approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs for being notified as a Tiger Reserve during the IX Plan. Efforts for inclusion of Satkosia as a Tiger Reserve at the fag end of the last financial year of the IX plan may not be fruitful.

Wildlife Crime Intelligence Cell

2791. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been actively considering to set up a Wildlife Crime Intelligence Cell in the country;

(b) if so, the *modus operandi* of the proposed Cell;

(c) whether the Wildlife crimes in the country are increasing and the State Government; as well as Central Government have failed to check them; and

(d) if so, the extent to which the proposed crime cell would check wildlife crimes?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) and (be) The Central Government has decided to set up a small cell within the Ministry to collect information, assist

and coordinate with various enforcement agencies under the Central and State Governments for effective implementation of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

(c) and (d) Due to the coordinated efforts made by the Central Government, State Governments and Non Governmental Organisations for effective implementation of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, a special thrust was given for tackling the problem of wildlife crimes. Recent seizures made in several parts of the country are an outcome of such coordinated efforts. The Wildlife Crime Cell will further improve the enforcement capabilities of Central and State Agencies.

Ban on fishing sharks and molluscs

2792. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "MPs back stir against shark-hunting ban" appearing in the Times of India on 26th November, 2001;

(b) whether Government have received any representation from the fishermen operating in the Coastal States of South India pleading for a withdrawal of ban on hunting and trading in Sharks and several species of molluscs;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the reaction of Government thereto and by when a decision in this regard is likely to be taken; and

(e) what other steps are proposed to be taken to safeguard and protect the livelihood of thousands of fishermen, affected by the ban?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Fishermen, Members of Parliament and State Governments and Union Territory administration have represented to